

REMARKS

By the foregoing Amendment, Claims 1, 6, 22 and 27 are amended and Claims 14-21 are cancelled. Entry of the Amendment, and favorable consideration thereof is earnestly requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 7-13. Claims 1-6 and 22-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Mitchell (U.S. Patent No. 5,661,099) and/or under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitchell in view of Rice (U.S. Patent No. 5,569,515). Applicant asks the Examiner to reconsider these rejections in view of the above Amendments and the below Remarks.

The present application is directed to a coil of stamps formed from a plurality of self-adhesive stamps detachably connected to each other end-to-end to form a continuous strip of stamps. The strip is wound about itself in spiral-like fashion, and includes an inner end and an outer end. The strip of stamps includes a portion adjacent to the inner end of the strip having a piece of liner material disposed thereon, and a portion having no liner material thereon, whereby the portion having no liner material thereon allows the strip to be wound directly onto itself.

Each of the plurality of self-adhesive stamps comprises a paper layer having a first surface and an opposing second surface, a pressure sensitive adhesive layer adhered to the first surface of the paper layer, an ink layer disposed on at least portions of the second surface of the paper layer, a primer layer disposed on the ink layer and on any portions of the second surface of the paper layer not having the ink layer disposed thereon, and a silicone layer disposed on the primer layer. The primer layer is preferably at least partially absorbed by any portions of the second surface of the paper layer upon which the primer layer is disposed, whereby the paper layer is sealed, and preferably substantially none of the silicone layer is absorbed by the paper layer.

With such a configuration, when the silicone layer is applied, not only does the silicone create a discrete layer on top of the areas of the ink layer, but it also creates a discrete layer on top of the areas of the paper layer. This is caused by the primer layer having sealed the paper layer such that substantially no silicone is absorbed therein. As such, when one stamp is placed on top of another, the adhesive layer of the top stamp does not directly contact the paper layer of the lower stamp. Instead, the adhesive layer of the top stamp contacts only the silicone layer of the bottom stamp. As the adhesive does not readily tightly adhere to the silicone layer, the top stamp may be readily and conveniently unrolled from the coil of stamps.

Because the invention is directed to stamps (as opposed to labels), a conventional paper is used for the substrate material. Claims 1, 6, 22 and 27, all rejected independent claims, have been amended to each include this requirement. This required limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Mitchell, whether considered alone or in combination with Rice.

Mitchell discloses self-wound label stock which includes a thermal paper substrate. One face of the substrate is coated with a primer layer having ultraviolet light blockers and a release layer having a smooth surface finish. Another face of the substrate is coated with an adhesive layer. Non-thermal printing is applied between the substrate and the primer layer. Thermal printing is applied to the substrate through the primer and release layers.

Mitchell does not disclose, teach or suggest in any way the element of the substrate being formed from conventional paper, as is required by all claims as amended. Rather, the entire purpose of Mitchell is to provide an improved thermal label formed from a thermal paper substrate. As such, Mitchell repeatedly teaches that the substrate is formed from thermal paper, and expressly states that "conventional paper or plastic substrates are replaced by a thermally receptive

imaging material.” (Column 1, lines 44-45). Moreover, it would not have been obvious to modify Mitchell to incorporate a conventional paper substrate, as such is expressly and repeatedly taught against therein and would be directly contrary to the objects and purposes thereof.

Similarly, it would not have been obvious to modify Rice or some other reference which does disclose a conventional paper substrate to incorporate the primer layer taught by Mitchell. As expressly and repeatedly taught by Mitchell, the entire purpose of the primer of Mitchell is to provide “ultraviolet blockers that absorb wavelengths of ultraviolet radiation that tend to fade images produced in thermal paper.” (Column 1, lines 60-63). In fact, Mitchell expressly states that “In place of the primer layer 20, the release layer 24 could be modified to incorporate the ultraviolet light blockers and be applied directly to the thermal paper 12 or similar substrate.” (Column 4, lines 17-20). As such, it should be clear that the sole purpose of the primer layer is to provide a mechanism for carrying ultraviolet light blockers so as to inhibit degradation of the thermal paper substrate. There is not even a hint that the primer layer is used to seal the paper before the release layer is applied. Thus, one faced with Mitchell and with a reference which teaches a substrate formed from conventional paper would have absolutely no reason to provide the primer layer as taught by Mitchell.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims, namely Claims 1-13 and 22-27, are patentable over the references of record, and earnestly solicits allowance of the same.

Respectfully submitted,



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